

Message Text

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41

ACTION SS-25

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R 291145Z SEP 76

FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2669

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LENINGRAD 1587

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, PINT, SREF, CIVS, OGEN

SUBJ: LENINGRAD JEWISH EMIGRATION SCENE: SUMMER 1976

REF: (A) LENINGRAD 1540, (B) MOSCOW 14099, (C) LENINGRAD 1409
(D) LENINGRAD 1586

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. LENINGRAD JEWISH EMIGRATION SCENE HAS BEEN RELATIVELY QUIET THIS SUMMER. ON BALANCE, THE SIGNS HAVE BEEN SUCH AS TO NOURISH HOPE AMONG THE ACTIVISTS, AND INDICATIONS ARE THAT LENINGRAD JEWS WILL CONTINUE TO APPLY FOR EMIGRATION PERMISSION FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

2. LENINGRAD REFUSENIKS HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED BY HOPEFUL SIGNS IN OVIR DECISIONS THIS PAST SUMMER. ONE OF OUR SOURCES NOTING OVIR'S PERMISSION OF SEPTEMBER 17 FOR THE LEONID RAINUS FAMILY TO EMIGRATE, PRESENTED HIS FOURTH APPLICATION TO OVIR ON SEPTEMBER 21, AND A WELL-KNOWN FIGURE AMONG LENINGRAD UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS HAS RECENTLY PRESENTED HIS FIRST APPLICATION TO EMIGRATE.

3. SUCH SIGNS OF HOPE AND PERHAPS A LOCAL PERCEPTION OF AMBIGUITY--EVEN ARBITRARINESS--IN OFFICIAL EMIGRATION POLICY ENCOURAGES LENINGRADERS TO ADOPT A GAMBLING ATTITUDE TOWARD THE APPLICATION PROCESS, WHICH ONE REFUSENIK THINKS DISTINGUISHES THEM FROM THE MOSCOW COMMUNITY OF WOULD-BE JEWISH EMIGRANTS. ONE SOURCE REMARKED THAT LENINGRADERS TEND TO "PLAY ROULETTE" WITH THE APPLICATION PROCESS, EVEN THOUGH HE HIMSELF REGARDS
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SITUATION IN LENINGRAD AS ACTUALLY DARKER THAN IN MOSCOW. AT

SAME TIME, THIS SOURCE CONSIDERS EMIGRATION PROSPECTS STILL DARKER IN OTHER CITIES.

4. SOME AMBIGUITY IN POLICY DOES APPARENTLY EXIST, AS INDICATED BY THE ERRATIC RHYTHM OF REFUSALS AND PERMISSIONS FOR THE SUMMER OF 1976 (REFTEL A). THUS FRIDAY OVIR SESSIONS MARKED BY REFUSALS CONTRAST WITH SESSIONS MARKED BY PERMISSIONS GRANTED. FOR EXAMPLE, NO PERMISSIONS WERE GRANTED FROM EARLY AUGUST TO SEPTEMBER 17, AND NO REFUSALS HAVE BEEN ISSUED SINCE SEPTEMBER 3. AT OTHER TIMES A ROUGH BALANCE OF REFUSALS AND PERMISSIONS EMERGES AS OCCURRED ON JULY 2 WHEN ONE REFUSENIK RECEIVED PERMISSION WHILE ANOTHER RECEIVED HIS SECOND REFUSAL. AGAIN, SUDDEN ACTIVE SESSIONS PUNCTUATE LONG PERIODS OF INACTIVITY SUCH AS MOST OF THE MONTH OF JULY AND THE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 13 TO SEPTEMBER 3.

5. THIS ERRATIC TRACK RECORD HAS BEEN PERCEIVED BY AT LEAST ONE SOURCE AS A BRIGHTENING OF THE EMIGRATION PICTURE THIS SPRING AND SUMMER IN COMPARISON TO PAST YEARS, AND HAS SERVED TO REINFORCE OTHER SMALL SIGNS OF HOPE.

6. IN OTHER DEVELOPMENTS, WE HAVE LEARNED THAT THE PRACTICE BY WHICH POLICE INTERCEPT INVITATIONS TO EMIGRATE AND PASS THEM ON TO ADDRESSEES ONLY UPON PRECISE IDENTIFICATION OF THE RELATIVES BY THE ADDRESSEE HAS NOT SPREAD TO LENINGRAD BUT THAT THE PRACTICE OF DEFINING "FAMILY" NARROWLY AS FATHER, MOTHER, AND MINOR CHILDREN MAY BE REACHING HERE. CONSOFF WAS RECENTLY SHOWN AN APPLICATION FORM WHICH DOES NOT REQUIRE THE LISTING, AS THE OLDER FORM DID, OF ALL RELATIVES.

7. IT ALSO APPEARS THAT LOCAL REFUSENIKS ARE WELL AWARE OF EVENTS BEYOND THE SOVIET BORDERS AND ARE SHARPLY ATTUNED TO ANY EFFECT THESE EVENTS MIGHT HAVE ON THEIR OWN FORTUNES. INDEED, ONE SOURCE SEES EXTERNAL CAUSES, RATHER THAN INTERNAL SOVIET POLICY, AS THE MAIN DETERMINANT OF THE DOWNWARD CURVE OF EMIGRATION OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS. HE HAS COMPARED THE FIGURES ON EMIGRATION TO ISRAEL BOTH FROM THE USA AND FROM THE USSR AND FOUND THE TRENDS TO BE ALMOST IDENTICAL. HE FINDS THE COMMON REASON TO BE THE LAST MIDDLE EAST WAR AND SUBSEQUENT INSECURITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST. IN HIS VIEW, "HEROES MIGHT BE
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ATTRACTED BY DANGER, BUT STATISTICS ARE MADE BY ORDINARY PEOPLE," A COMMENT WHICH MAY SHED SOME LIGHT ON THE VIENNA DROP-OUT PHENOMENON. HE IS AWARE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF ISRAELI MEASURES TO CURB THE DROP-OUT RATE AND EXPRESSED SOME ANXIETY ABOUT THEM. HE ALSO SOUGHT CONSOFFS' ADVICE AS TO THE BEST TIMING FOR SUBMITTING HIS NEXT APPLICATION--WHETHER BEFORE OR AFTER THE AMERICAN ELECTIONS.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LENINGRAD 1587

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8. THERE ARE GOOD REASONS TO EXPECT THAT LENINGRAD JEWS WILL CONTINUE TO APPLY TO EMIGRATE FOR SOME TIME TO COME. POLICE MEASURES THEMSELVES MAY HAVE THE UNINTENDED SECONDARY EFFECT OF PRODUCING A NEW GENERATION OF WOULD-BE EMIGRANTS SINCE ALL JEWS, WHETHER THEY EVER CONSIDERED EMIGRATING OR NOT, ARE AFFECTED ADVERSELY BY SOVIET REPRESSIVE MEASURES AIMED AT CURBING EMIGRATION. AN IRONICAL JOKE DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN JEWS AND ZIONISTS HAS JEWS AS THOSE ALREADY ON THE PAYROLL; ZIONISTS ARE THOSE WHO ARE APPLYING FOR JOBS. CONSOFF HAS EVEN HEARD OF OFFICIAL CRITICISM OF FACTORY DIRECTORS FOR HAVING A QTE POOR STAFF COMPOSITON END QTE. AS ONE ACQUAINTANCE REMARKED, ONE MIGHT HAVE TO EMIGRATE FOR THE SAKE OF ONE'S CHILDREN. HE ALLEGES THAT LENINGRAD STATE UNIVERSITY AND THE INSTITUTE WHERE HE DID GRADUATE WORK HAVE NOT ADMITTED JEWS FOR AT LEAST THREE YEARS.

9. AT SAME TIME, CONSOFF HAS DETECTED A SENSE AMONG SOME HOLDING THEIR JEWISHNESS IN TRUMP OR A FEELING OF RESTRAINT FOR PERSONAL OR FAMILY REASONS; ONE ACQUAINTANCE HAS HELD BACK FOR THE SAKE OF PARENTS WHO WOULD BE RUINED BY HIS PETITION TO EMIGRATE. THE FATHER IS A LOCAL, BUT HIGH-RANKING, PARTY MEMBER. AN ETHNIC RUSSIAN ARTIST RECENTLY FIRED FROM HIS TEACHING JOB SEEMED TO DRAW SOME FACETIOUS COMFORT FROM THE FACT OF HAVING A JEWISH WIFE. A JOKE RECENTLY HEARD BY CONSOFF POINTS UP THIS VALUE OF JEWISHNESS.

AN AMERICAN DELEGATION, INCLUDING A JEW, IS MAKING VISITS TO SOVIET FACTORIES. AT EVERY FACTORY
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VISITED, THE JEW ASKS THE DIRECTOR WHETHER HE HAS ANY JEWS IN HIS WORK FORCE WHO ARE HEROES OF SOCIALIST LABOR. AT EACH FACTORY THE ANSWER IS NO. FINALLY ONE FACTORY DIRECTOR CALLS UP THE NEXT FACTORY ON THE ITINERARY AND FOREWARNS THEM OF THE INEVITABLE QUESTION. THE DIRECTOR AT THAT FACTORY CALLS IN AN ORDINARY LABORER AND SAYS, "COMRADE IVANOV* FOR TODAY YOU WILL BE A HERO OF SOCIALIST LABOR AND A JEW. STICK AROUND UNTIL I CALL YOU IN." COMES THE DELEGATION AND THE QUESTION IS ASKED. THE DIRECTOR DIALS HIS TELEPHONE AND SMUGLY ASKS, "COMRAD IVANOV?" "HE WHAT?*"

10. COMMENT: DESPITE SOMETIMES UNFOUNDED OPTIMISM, THE TRENDS OF THE SPRING AND SUMMER MAY WELL MAKE PROSPECTS LOOK BETTER TO THAT PART OF THE SOVIET JEWISH COMMUNITY WHICH WISHES TO EMIGRATE. IF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF LENINGRAD EMIGRANTS HAS NOT RISEN SIGNIFICANTLY, NEITHER HAS IT CONTINUED THE STEEP DECLINE OF THE PREVIOUS THREE YEARS. IN FACT, FIGURES CITED REFTEL B AND PREVIOUSLY INDICATE AN UPWARD MOVEMENT DURING THE SPRING WHICH, ALTHOUGH NOT SUSTAINED OVER THE SUMMER STILL LEAVES THE AVERAGE LEVEL OF EMIGRATION ABOVE THAT OF LAST YEAR IN SHARP CONTRAST TO THE YEAR-TO-YEAR DECLINE SINCE 1973. THIS LEVELLING OFF OF THE DECLINE OF EMIGRATION, EVEN IF PARTLY RELATED TO VARIABLES INDEPENDENT OF SOVIET INTERNAL POLICY, NONETHELESS REFLECTS DECISION BY THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES. AND THE PERCEPTION OF THIS HOPEFUL TREND BY SOVIET JEWS--COUPLED WITH A CERTAIN BACKLASH AMONG THEM AGAINST THE REPRESSIVE ELEMENTS OF THE PARTY'S EMIGRATION POLICY--WILL HAVE THE EFFECT OF PRODUCING NEWER GENERATIONS OF APPLICANTS FOR EMIGRATION. NEUBERT

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